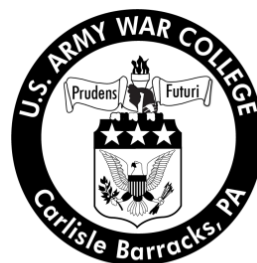


Strategy Research Project

Improving Leadership Development within U.S. Customs and Border Protection

by

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United States Army War College
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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

IMPROVING LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT WITHIN U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION

by

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In direct response to the attacks on September 11, 2011, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has stood as America's guardians. More than 58,000 men and women have shouldered the monumental responsibility of securing America's borders, protecting the American public against terrorists and fostering economic security through facilitating and securing legitimate trade. In the face of a tighter fiscal reality, an increasingly youthful and inexperienced work force and an aging senior leadership corps readying for retirement, leadership development has never been more important.

This strategy research paper will examine the current leadership development policies and programs within CBP while studying alternative proven models from successful organizations, as well as ideologies found in the most recent research of the topic in academia. The outcome of this analysis intends to provide provocative ideas to improve CBP's leadership development efforts and help assure CBP has a competent, skilled and ready corps of strategic leaders well in to the future.

IMPROVING LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT WITHIN U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION

The terrorist attacks on September the 11th were a turning point for our nation. We saw the goals of a determined enemy: to expand the scale of their murder, and force America to retreat from the world. And our nation accepted a mission: We will defeat this enemy. The United States of America is determined to guard our homeland against future attacks.

—President George W. Bush

The terrorist attacks on the morning of September 11, 2001 marked a major turning point in American history. Within the United States, these attacks stripped away the American public's general sense of security, forced the country into war and spurred the largest governmental reorganization since the end of World War II.

A little more than one year after those attacks, on November 25, 2002, the United States government established the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). This immense undertaking involved the reorganization of 22 governmental agencies and the merger of long established agencies to create new component agencies within DHS.

One of the newly created agencies was the United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP). CBP was officially established March 1, 2003 and was tasked with the monumental responsibility of securing America's borders, protecting the American public against terrorists and fostering economic security through facilitating and securing legitimate trade. However, while CBP may be a young organization, CBP's historical roots go back hundreds of years, as CBP is made up of such component agencies as the U.S. Customs Service which was established in 1789, the Immigration and Naturalization Service which was formed in 1933 yet has roots going back to 1891 and the U.S. Border Patrol which was formed in 1924.

Since its establishment, CBP's mission has grown in both scope and size; the agency now has ten component offices with over 58,000 employees and an annual budget of nearly \$12 billion dollars. This pace and level of growth presents numerous leadership challenges.

During this period of intense growth, CBP has relied heavily upon existing senior leaders to sustain the agency and be the leaders of change. These senior leaders have been thrust into the vital role of change advocates while CBP works to create programs to develop the next generation of leaders who will be essential to the continued success of the agency.

This paper will focus upon leadership development within CBP. Specifically, this paper will explore CBP's current leadership development policy, its leadership development progress and the implications of these existing processes to the long term effectiveness within CBP. This paper will then compare the CBP leadership development program with other programs such as the U.S. Army and what it does to develop its leadership corps. To provide further comparison from other sources, this paper will examine additional examples of leadership development from non-traditional, highly successful companies in the private sector as well as academic resources in the expectation that this analysis can provide a fresh perspective and develop alternatives or additions to the current leadership development processes in place. Ultimately, the purpose of this paper is to highlight areas where CBP may be able to draw lessons learned from established, successful organizations and refine the current leadership development process within CBP.

Leadership Development Policy

To begin, it is important to establish how we define leadership development. BusinessDictionary.com defines leadership development as the “teaching of leadership qualities, including communication, ability to motivate others, and management, to an individual who may or may not use the learned skills in a leadership position.”¹ Army Regulation 350-1, “Army Training and Leader Development,” defines leadership development as the “deliberate, continuous, sequential, and progressive process, grounded in Army values, that grows Soldiers and Army civilians into competent and confident leaders capable of decisive action.”² It is a formalized process for developing employees who have the potential to rise up and lead in the future. Clearly, leadership development should play a pivotal role in any organization’s succession planning. Dr. William J. Rothwell, a Penn State University Professor of Workforce Education and Development, defines succession planning as “any effort designed to ensure the continued effective performance of an organization, division, department, or work group by making provisions for the development, replacement, and strategic application of key people over time.”³

Why is this of such importance now? Kim Lamoureux, the Vice President for Research with Bersin & Associates, states that “census data shows that over the next 10 years, retirement rates will increase significantly, causing a vacuum in the ranks of middle management.”⁴ According to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) 2006 Demographic Profile of The Federal Workforce, over 38% of the Department of Homeland Security workforce is within ten years of retirement.⁵ This analysis illustrates the potential crisis facing CBP today and why the issue of leadership development has become particularly relevant in recent years. If CBP does not begin investing in the

development of future leaders in earnest, the resultant leadership gap could become a serious dilemma in the future.

Why is policy important? Policy is the glue that holds an organization's various efforts together and keeps them moving in concert. A policy document simply provides a framework upon which a cohesive implementing strategy can be built. It allows for effective long term planning to take place and ensures that all of the various offices and programs within an organization are moving toward a common goal. When applied to CBP and the absence of any policy guidance on leadership development, there are multiple opportunities for systemic planning inefficiencies. The dangers these inefficiencies present to the successful development of future strategic leaders, as well as the realities of today's fiscally constrained environment, clearly highlight the need for the development of a unifying policy. Without sufficient guidance, there exists the danger of duplication of efforts or worse, misallocation of effort and valuable resources.

What is policy? The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines policy as "an overall plan, principle or guideline."⁶ BusinessDictionary.com further refines this definition of policy as "The set of basic principles and associated guidelines, formulated and enforced by the governing body of an organization, to direct and limit its actions in pursuit of long-term goals."⁷

To ensure a clear understanding of the term policy, it is important to take a moment and distinguish the difference between policy and strategy. The U.S. Army War College's Professor Alan G. Stolberg warns that "the words policy and strategy are often used interchangeably. This is often convenient, but the terms have distinct

meanings.” He goes on to state that “[p]olicy is “*what* to do about something,” not *how* to do it. The implementing strategy provides the “*how* to do it.”⁸ [emphasis in original]

While CBP appears to have an implicit, unwritten leadership development strategy, it does not have an established leadership development policy. This omission can possibly be explained in part due to the fact that CBP is such a young office. The governmental restructuring that created CBP was monumental. It represented a tectonic shift in the way of doing business for the agencies that overnight became Customs and Border Protection.

Given the absence of policy, how is CBP pursuing leadership development? It is clear through the efforts of CBP’s Office of Training and Development that CBP has a vision, albeit unspecified, for the development of their senior leaders. CBP has taken some very innovative steps to successfully develop their strategic leadership corps and is actively developing select members of the next generation of leaders through several avenues which will be discussed later in this paper. According to the 2010 U.S. Army War College Strategic Leadership Primer, having a vision is only part of the equation, “Strategic leaders guide the achievement of their organizational vision within a larger enterprise by directing policy and strategy...”⁹ [emphasis in original]. The question becomes however not how much has CBP done to develop the next generation of strategic leaders but rather, how effective can these efforts ultimately be if there is no overarching, unifying policy? It is difficult to arrive at a desired destination without a map to guide you there.

CBP Leadership Development Program

CBP’s programmatic leadership development efforts represent both homegrown, internally developed schools, as well as participation in external advanced leadership

programs. These programs range from Department of Defense Senior Service Schools such as National University and the U.S. Army War College to programs affiliated with private institutions such as Harvard University, George Washington University and The Center for Creative Leadership.

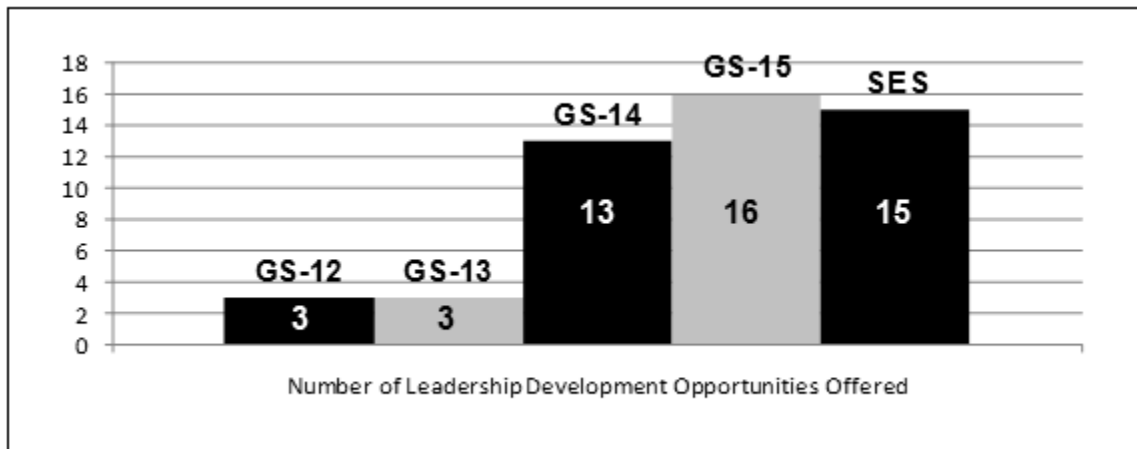


Figure 1: Chart Illustrating Current CBP Leadership Development Opportunities; Broken Down by Number of Programs Offered to Each Rank

In an attempt to effectively capture CBP's leadership development efforts, the twenty two leadership development programs currently offered by CBP were analyzed and grouped according to the targeted rank levels. Several programs were available to multiple leadership levels and accounted for individually across each rank. As an example, GS-14 and GS-15s could apply to attend the U.S. Army War College therefore; this single opportunity was counted for both GS ranks.

As you can see in Figure 1, leadership development opportunities within CBP are primarily offered to only the upper most ranks. Concentrating advanced leadership development at the higher ranks within an organization may be logical since those closest to the top of the organizational chart will be the next crop of strategic leaders but

there are significant risks to excluding an organization's lower rank structures. There are two main areas of concern with the present leadership development structure:

- The organizational climate and culture,
- Employee retention.

CBP's enacted values appear to support the view that leadership development is important for only those employees who reach a certain rank. There are inherent dangers in not ensuring an organization's espoused and enacted values are congruent. One example of such a danger is a degradation of trust. Ting Ren writes that there is a "positive relationship between value congruence and trust-building among individuals." Ren further writes that "similar interests, similar goals or objectives, and common values and principles facilitate the development of identification-based trust." While, "perception incongruence can cause distrust between individuals... and within organizations."¹⁰ Robert Allen O'Neal asserts that "Many organizations have expended significant time, effort and money on composing organizational values statements, which are then meant to become a benchmark for employee commitment and behavior... [a]ll this without any particular evidence that this activity results in any tangible business result."¹¹ O'Neal goes on to write that "[v]alues must be enacted through facilitating conditions by members of the organization in order to be salient in producing change in outcomes." It is not enough to craft eloquent values statements; there must be action behind an organization's espoused values.

This value incongruence could be toxic to an organization's climate. An organization's climate is vital to their effectiveness and success. Organizational climate is defined by Michael D. Thompson as "the way in which organizational members

perceive and characterize their environment in an attitudinal and value-based manner.”¹² If the lower level employees do not view CBP leadership as “walking the talk,” they will begin to lose trust in their leaders. This erosion of trust could permeate into all areas of the organization, leading to 2nd and 3rd order effects not directly associated with leadership development yet becoming corrosive well outside the boundaries of leadership development. Steven M. Jones states “[w]hen the professed principles of leaders do not align with their actual practices, trust and confidence are degraded, and overall organizational effectiveness is compromised.”¹³ Debra Nelson and James Quick wrote, “When espoused values are not confirmed by actions, the organizational culture is weakened.”¹⁴

What is organizational culture? Stephen Gerras, Leonard Wong and Charles Allen collectively define organizational culture as “the taken-for-granted values, underlying assumptions, expectations, collective memories, and definitions present in an organization.”¹⁵ When you apply this definition to CBP’s current leadership development structure you may get a message that differs significantly from that which CBP sends to its employees. Marty Herrin, an Organizational Development Specialist with CBP states, “As the world premier border enforcement agency and the unified border agency for the United States, it is important that U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) have a cadre of leaders to shape our new agency and guide us into the future.”¹⁶ This statement represents CBP’s espoused values. However, the current leadership development structure depicted in Figure 1, which represents CBP’s enacted values, appears to tell a different story. In their book, *Organizational Behavior*, authors Steven McShane and Mary Von Glinow state, “Espoused values do not represent an

organization's culture. Rather, they establish the public image that corporate leaders want to display. Enacted values, on the other hand, are values in use."¹⁷

A final point of issue with regard to CBP's organizational culture is the amazing growth CBP has experienced over the last ten years and the possible detrimental effect that growth has had on the organizational culture. The effects of this growth can be felt in all areas of the organization, especially in the areas of employee corruption and employee retention.

Using the U.S. Border Patrol as a model, in the six years between 2004 and 2010, the Border Patrol more than doubled its workforce. It is estimated that at the end of 2010 close to seventy percent of the Agents in the field had less than five years in service. Having such a large influx of newly hired agents will potentially challenge the existing organizational culture. How do you maintain cultural continuity and indoctrinate new hires into the Border Patrol culture when more than two thirds of their brother and sister Agents have just a couple years in service and are relatively new themselves? Geerte Hofstede and Gert Jan Hofstede sum up this issue perfectly when they write, "Culture is the unwritten book with rules of the social game that is passed on to newcomers by its members, nesting itself in their minds."¹⁸ It should be noted that while this is being discussed with a negative connotation in this paper, this situation could be leveraged for a positive outcome if a major cultural shift is desired.

Extrapolate this issue out against the whole of CBP and you can then begin to see the ramifications across the organization on a grand scale and the challenges this growth represents. When you have employees who do not have a solid grasp of the organizational culture and they are surrounded by others much like themselves, they

are rudderless. When an organization hires someone, that new person is surrounded on all sides by living, breathing examples of the organization's culture. There are examples all around them of everything from what behavior is acceptable to the camaraderie and sense of belonging to something larger and more important than themselves. When an organization more than doubles in size in six years, peer role modeling could begin to fail. This directly leads to issues with corruption and employee retention. On the topic of corruption within CBP, Commissioner Alan Bersin said "More than 125 U.S. Customs and Border Protection employees have been arrested or indicted on corruption charges for smuggling drugs or illegal aliens, laundering money, and conspiracy since 2004."¹⁹ Corruption within the U.S. Customs and Border Protection has always been present throughout the history of the component offices however; this is a clear illustration of the negative impacts this level of growth has had and a warning that the erosion of organizational culture has begun.

As with corruption, these same issues directly contribute to issues with employee retention. Employees at all levels have a basic need to feel engaged, to feel valued and offering them opportunities for growth can play a crucial part in that organizational feedback. Ignoring lower level employees or offering limited opportunities for professional and personal growth which are so constrained in number to effectively make them unattainable for the majority of employees can have harmful effects on retention. Greg Smith, a noted author in the field of leadership development states, "For many people, learning new skills and advancing their career is just as important as the money they make. In a study by Linkage, Inc. more than 40 percent of the respondents said they would consider leaving their present employer for another job with the same

benefits if that job provided better career development.”²⁰ With declining budgets and the increased costs of rehiring and retraining a new employee, CBP can no longer afford to ignore this growing problem.

There is no denying the up-front cost of increasing leadership development opportunities for the lower rank employees will be higher than maintaining the status quo. However, when contrasted against the long term cost savings CBP will realize with increased employee retention, decreased hiring and training costs and the efficiencies created by increasing the leadership capabilities of the lower rank employees, these savings will more than off-set the initial costs. Of employee retention, Jones wrote, “[a]t the organizational level, the evidence is clear that positive command climates act as a magnet that attracts and holds on to spirited employees who are motivated and committed.”²¹

The U.S. Army Model

Within the United States Government and across corporate America, there are many examples of successful organizations that have time-honored, well-defined leadership development policies. CBP can look to these examples and learn, taking the best practices to form a comprehensive leadership development policy which can then unite and guide future efforts in an efficient and effective manner.

The United States military has long been recognized as one of the premier organizations for the development and molding of successful leaders. Born from the U.S. Army’s 236-year history, Army Regulation 350-1 incorporates over two centuries of experience in the cultivation of future leaders. This living document outlines every facet of leadership training and development within the U.S. Army, from the enlisted ranks through the top echelon of leadership found within the flag officer ranks. Of principal

interest to CBP is the Officer Education System (OES) and Non-Commissioned Officer Education System (NCOES). These two leader development systems represent the core of the Army leadership development efforts and share the common goal to “develop Army leaders who clearly provide purpose, direction, motivation, and vision to their subordinates while executing operational missions in support of their commander’s intent.”²²

While CBP does not have an officer/enlisted rank structure, they do have a similar, military-like hierarchy and chain of command structure that lends itself nicely to comparison and future adaptation of the Army model. Within CBP there are those commonly referred to as “line” agents. These agents are the primary workers who would most easily compare to the lower enlisted ranks outside of the Non-Commissioned Officer corps. The next two supervisory levels, commonly referred to first and second line supervisors, would translate well to the Army Non-Commissioned Officer ranks and be appropriately described by the AR 350-1 NCOES purpose statement, “The goal of NCO training and the NCOES is to prepare noncommissioned officers to lead and train Soldiers who work and fight under their supervision, and to assist their leaders to execute unit missions.”²³ The levels of management within CBP above those ranks would be comparable to the Army’s Commissioned Officers. The published goal of the Army OES system is “to produce a corps of leaders who are fully competent in technical, tactical and leadership skills, knowledge and experience... are prepared to operate in Joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational (JIIM) environments.”²⁴

The foundational base of the U.S. Army's leadership development process is the assessment and selection of those Officers and NCOs who possess the requisite talents and capabilities to become future leaders. The Army recognizes that while people with an aptitude for leadership can be developed, not everyone can become leaders and it is necessary to selectively focus an organization's limited development resources to maximize the on investment.

To fulfill their goal described above, the U.S. Army employs three domains of leadership development: institutional training, operational assignments, and self-development. These domains "define and engage a continuous cycle of education, training, selection, experience, assessment, feedback, reinforcement, and evaluation."²⁵ The U.S. Army views learning, experiential assignments and feedback as forming the basis for professional growth and state that overall, "the leader development process enhances leader capabilities so leaders can assume positions of greater responsibility."²⁶

If we look at the three leadership development domains as described by the U.S. Army individually, institutional learning provides U.S. Army leaders with the foundation for lifelong learning as outlined in DA PAM 600-3, "Institutional training provides the solid foundation upon which all future development rests."²⁷ 600-3 goes on to state that "[d]uring institutional training, leaders learn the knowledge, skills and attributes essential to high-quality leadership while training to perform critical tasks."²⁸

The second domain of leadership development within the U.S. Army is the concept of operational assignments. Operational assignments represent a critical link in the development process where "this operational experience provides them the

opportunity to use, hone and build on what they learned through the formal education process.”²⁹ The Officers are allowed to put what they learned to the test operationally and 600-3 asserts that when this is done and “these leadership dimensions are tested, reinforced and strengthened by follow on operational assignments..., leaders attain and sustain true competency...”³⁰

The final U.S. Army leadership development domain is self-development. The U.S. Army recognizes that learning is a life-long process that must be fostered and encouraged because “[i]nstitutional training and operational assignments alone do not ensure that Army officers attain and sustain the degree of competency needed to perform their varied missions.”³¹ 600-3 clearly emphasizes the importance of a leader to continually improve and develop themselves professionally to remain at the forefront of their profession and further states that “[s]elf-assessment and taking appropriate remedial or reinforcing action is critical to a leader’s success.”³²

The U.S. Army, through DA PAM 600-3, defines six principles that are essential in officer development and career management. These principles provide a frame of reference and 600-3 lists them as the following:

- Leader development is doctrinally based with FM 1-0, FM 3-0, FM 7-0 and FM 6–22. Together, these references provide the foundation needed to develop competent, confident leaders capable of assuming positions of greater responsibility and create the conditions for sustained organizational success.

- Leader development programs should be responsive to the environment, including such factors as law, policy, resources, force structure, world situation, technology, and professional development.
- An officer's success should be measured in terms of contribution. An officer's professional goals are directly related to his or her own definition of success in the profession of arms.
- High-quality Soldiers deserve high-quality leaders. This principle is the heart of leader development and breathes life into all aspects of the seven Army fundamental imperatives — training, force mix, doctrine, modern equipment, quality people, leader development, and facilities.
- We recognize as a philosophy that leaders can be developed. While a principle in itself, it is inextricably linked to the philosophy of shared responsibilities among the individual leaders; the schoolhouses, branches and functional area proponents throughout the Army; and the commanders in the field.
- Leader development is cooperative and holistic. The individual officer, unit commanders, mentors and Army educational institutions all share in the responsibility for developing leaders at every level.

As would be expected of such a venerated and established organization, the U.S. Army's literature on the subject of leaders and leadership development is voluminous and presents far too much information for large scale inclusion in to this research paper. The purpose of this section was not to rewrite the U.S. Army leadership manuals but rather, to simply introduce the U.S. Army leadership

development model, its core strategy, accompanying domains and principles to better inform the reader and provide influence for framing any proposed solutions.

The INFOSYS Model

When looking for an exceptional corporate model for leadership development and an organization that valued the fostering and development of a strong organizational culture, the desire was to find a company that was outside the mainstream models that are always used for reference such as IBM, GE or 3M. A company that offered strong, tested foundational leadership development practices yet perhaps was outside the mainstream enough to be refreshing and different. INFOSYS fit that bill perfectly.

INFOSYS Limited was started in 1981 by seven people with \$250 and today is India's second largest IT company and globally recognized as a leader in IT and consulting with annual revenues of more than \$6.6 billion dollars.³³ INFOSYS has been rated India's number one most admired company every year since 2000 in the Wall Street Journal Asia 200³⁴ and also ranked as the 15th most trusted brand in India by The Brand Trust Report in 2011.³⁵ Probably more important however, INFOSYS is equally as well known for their values and leadership practices.³⁶

Utilizing INFOSYS's model for leadership development shown below in Figure 2, CBP would do well to follow INFOSYS's lead in talent identification and development. By utilizing the INFOSYS model and focusing more attention on identifying, enabling and nurturing young, promising employees, CBP can begin to prepare their back bench, the people who, with proper guidance, could become the future generation of strategic leaders.



Figure 2: INFOSYS, Inc. Leadership Development Model

As illustrated in Figure 2, the INFOSYS model focuses on three main areas in leadership development, Identify, Enable and Nurture. We will take a look at each of these areas individually and examine how CBP may be able to focus its efforts to enhance and increase its leadership development within the lower ranks of employees.

Identify

The primary questions facing any program looking for future leaders are how do we find these future leaders and how do we know what to look for? Hemant Kogekar, the Principal of Kogekar Consulting and frequent contributor to CIO Magazine asserts, "Future leaders will most probably emerge from today's high performing employees."³⁷ That's easy to say but how exactly do we identify those traits that make up a high performing employee's DNA? The Ashridge Business School, one of the top MBA schools in England, identified intensity, complexity and drive as the three underlying traits found in most successful leaders. From those common traits they developed a list

of some of the top characteristic present in those with high leadership potential which can be seen in Figure 3. These characteristics begin to give shape to quantifiable markers one could identify in a person with future leadership potential.

Underlying trait	Visible characteristics
Intensity (Extra energy and enthusiasm; sensitivity, reactivity)	Thrives on ambiguity, "impossible" problems and change; wholehearted effort; sensitive to the concerns and feelings of others; eager to learn, understand and improve
Complexity (Extraordinary perceptivity, vision and capacity for original multi-level thinking)	Learns faster and more effectively than others; creative visionary; quickly grasps complex ideas and problems; offers unique perspectives and solutions; independent thinker
Drive (Intrinsic motivation, commitment and conscientiousness)	Engaged; self-directed; dedicated; regularly exceeds expectations; intent on excellence; multiple areas of expertise; natural leader; influential

Figure 3: Characteristics of Leadership Potential

Simply identifying these high performing individuals is not enough however; identification needs to be one piece in a larger, holistic process aimed to develop this raw talent as it is identified.

Enable

When speaking of employee development, the University of California San Diego (UCSD) defines the employee and supervisor responsibilities as "[e]mployees have the principal responsibility for developing their skills, knowledge, and experience. The supervisor's responsibility is to assess, inform, refer, guide, and develop."³⁸ In nearly all of the professional articles researched for this paper with regard to the topic of leadership development, it is interesting and important to note that the onus of

development rests squarely upon the shoulders of the employee. To draw again from the Ashridge model of leadership potential in Figure 4, potential leaders should exhibit the characteristics of being engaged, self-directed, dedicated, and intent on excellence. These characteristics have a direct correlation to drive. Drive is the described underlying trait of which is comprised of having intrinsic motivation, commitment and conscientiousness. There exists a natural synergy between the responsibility of the employee to take control of their development and the Ashridge model's assertion that Drive is one of the intrinsic traits found in those with leadership characteristics.

Scott Williams asserts that Self-awareness is an important piece of the enabling process as it "is an essential first step toward maximizing management skills... Self-awareness can improve our judgment and help us identify opportunities for professional development and personal growth."³⁹ A key element in enabling employees to develop their leadership characteristics and move them down the road of becoming a future strategic leader is enhancing their self-awareness. Providing this self-awareness is a crucial step in the UCSD model of the supervisory responsibilities to assess, inform, refer, guide, and develop. This feedback is tricky however and sometimes uncomfortable. This process is often a difficult one since, no matter where you are at within the chain of command, hearing honest feedback is not always flattering and often times can prove to be difficult to digest.⁴⁰ The importance of self-awareness and the power that personal knowledge brings to an employee speaks again to the already recognized limits of the current CBP performance appraisal system.

Nurture

The eternal debate between nature versus nurture in leadership aside, there is an Indian phrase that is often used when speaking about nurturing leadership qualities,

“Nurturing leadership qualities during stable times will help organisations [sic] survive the tough times.”⁴¹ Throughout this paper and indeed, in many of the research materials used, there is made a grand assumption about these high performance employees with the requisite characteristics to become great strategic leaders. The assumption is that these employees *want* to progress beyond their current position and aspire to move to positions of greater responsibility. This is a dangerous assumption and one that if not challenged, could lead to trying to force someone into roles and positions that they do not desire which would be counterproductive no matter how much potential that person has. The single best first step anyone can take when they believe they have found someone with leadership potential is talk to them. Open a dialogue and see what they are interested in for their future and whether moving up the ladder is of interest to them and their family.

Application of INFOSYS Model to CBP

As you will recall, the primary characteristics of a high performing employees which are most often found in highly successful leaders are intensity, complexity and drive. These characteristics are certainly important but in and of themselves, they are not enough. Knowing someone has these characteristics is surety of success as a leader. These characteristics need to then be analyzed within the framework of an organization’s core competencies, those qualities that they have identified as vitally important for their strategic leaders to possess.

OPM defines the Executive Core Qualifications (ECQ) as “the competencies needed to build a federal corporate culture that drives for results, serves customers, and builds successful teams and coalitions within and outside the organization.”⁴² They

further state that “The Executive Core Qualifications are required for entry to the Senior Executive Service,”⁴³ and define the five qualifications as:

- Leading Change
- Leading People
- Results Driven
- Business Acumen
- Building Coalitions⁴⁴

CBP further refines these OPM ECQs with a list of eight, agency specific core strategic leadership competencies:

- Principled
- People Centered
- Effective Communicator
- Performance Centered
- Diversity Advocate
- Highly Collaborative
- Nimble and Innovative
- Steward of Public Resources⁴⁵

From the lists above, it is evident that DHS and CBP have put a lot of effort into defining what qualities are necessary for their strategic leaders. The next logical question then becomes, now that you’ve identified what characteristics a potential future leader should have, how do you accurately determine who has those requisite skills? Currently, the only available option for CBP to identify and document these leadership qualities is the yearly performance appraisal. For many years however, the human

resource world has railed against the value and continued use of the classic performance appraisal model. General consensus of the classic performance appraisal deems them inaccurate, subjective and just plain useless.

Robbie Kunreuther is the Director of Government Personnel Services and a frequent contributor to FedSmith.com. Mr. Kunreuther recently wrote an article about the upcoming federal performance appraisals in which he wrote:

All of these appraisals will focus on a year's worth of performance that will have already passed. According to the late Dr. W. Edwards Deming, a brilliant statistician and management thinker, it is unlikely that all of this time and effort will lead to tangible improvements in the coming fiscal year. He found that past ratings do not reliably predict positive changes for the future.

He went on to write further about the reasons why he views these appraisals lack value:

Most of the appraisals that are coming up next month, however, will be arrived at without much, if any, actual evidence obtained and annotated during the rating year. The late Dr. Deming, however, would be surprised to learn that Federal supervisors and managers commonly lack sufficient documentation to grade employees objectively.

If these appraisals are not being developed upon the foundation of objective, documented observations and performance, what information and factors are then influencing these appraisals? Building then off his assertion that supervisors and managers are producing these performance appraisals without sufficient documentation, Mr. Kunreuther writes:

[s]ubjective ratings are susceptible to factors other than the past year's achievement. They may be unduly influenced by recent events, by personal friendships and alliances, and other biases – most of them unconscious. In fact, numerous studies of the evaluation process have shown that impressions of other people can be subject to any number of “non-merit” factors... Another likely influence will be the “bell curve”.⁴⁶

CBP's current performance appraisal system is woefully inadequate. For non-supervisory personnel, the yearly performance appraisal consists of a one sheet,

pass/fail rating. When current leaders attempt to find the high performance employees within their ranks, this is the level of analysis that exists, pass or fail. For supervisory personnel, CBP has in place a “multi-rating level DHS Performance Management System” which mirrors much more closely the classic yearly performance appraisal model to include many of the design flaws described by Mr. Kunreuther.

Undoubtedly, this is not how it should be. Performance appraisals were initially conceived and developed with the desire of becoming a useful tool in the supervisor’s tool box by which they could enhance their employees’ productivity and efficiency. Tracy Martin with Talentmgt.com fittingly wrote “Ideally, performance appraisals should provide feedback, motivate employees, identify top performers and foster communication. But often, they have the opposite effect.”⁴⁷ Ms. Martin further described some of the primary flaws she saw with the current performance appraisal system as a training issue. Supervisors and managers are often not properly trained how to effectively assess their subordinates and provide constructive criticism. Supervisors also tend to give everyone similar ratings to avoid difficult situation and possible litigation issues and finally, performance appraisals are often times, not adequately linked to development opportunities and motivational-reward systems. This leads to the current system where “[a]s a result of these inconsistent and often missed opportunities, performance appraisals thwart the intended goals of the organizations and lead employees to question management and the enterprise.”⁴⁸

The purpose of this research paper is not to develop a new performance appraisal system. However, it is clear from the research that CBP’s current performance appraisal system is ineffective and should be looked at with an eye toward

improving the value and feedback it offers both to the employees as well as the leaders who will rely upon them assistance in identifying those employees who have the potential to become the future leaders of this organization. Without this vital tool it is unclear how potential future leaders will be identified and developed.

Additionally, as was discussed earlier in this paper, role modeling or mentoring is one of the most effective ways to nurture a developing future leader and ensure he or she stays on the pathway of progress. This mentorship is only one piece of the puzzle. Nurturing a promising future leader involves utilizing every available resource to open as many doors as possible and allow this potential to flourish. As we have already covered, CBP has many promising programs, work exchange programs and initiatives available for the senior ranks of management in place. The key will be giving that same level of developmental opportunity to those promising individuals who have yet to attain these ranks in the hopes that by doing so, we will be consequently increasing the numbers of skilled future leaders. Philip Beddows, co-founder of the Silk Road Partnership and writer for Boardroom Magazine wrote:

[m]y conclusion is that as much well-focused and intelligently thought-through investment as possible should definitely be made in leadership, whether at business schools, through talent and leadership initiatives or via the use of mentoring and coaching. The raw ingredients that are appropriate for each situation, organisation [sic] and culture need to be present, but without the right nurture, management and experiences to add, the talent will never achieve its promise.⁴⁹

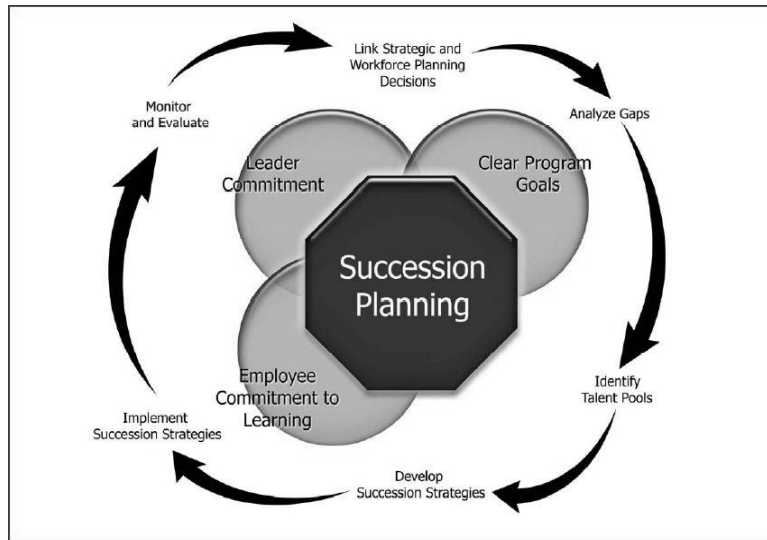


Figure 4: Office of Personnel Management Succession Planning Model

When the INFOSYS model in Figure 2 is compared to the OPM Succession Planning Model you can clearly see the similarities and identify where these two models overlap. There are several areas where the INFOSYS model of Identify, Enable and Nurture can be cross walked into the OPM model and utilized in the areas of talent or potential identification, enabling or implementing succession strategies and nurture or monitor and evaluate.

Identification of Potential

There was an interesting commonality among effective leadership development programs, from the U.S. Army, and corporations such as INFOSYS, Adobe, Synopsis and Texas Instruments to think tanks such as the Center for Creative Leadership. All cite the recognition and nurturing of leadership potential in employees as one of the most vital elements in successful development of future leaders. Dr. Rothwell states “develop every employee who wants to advance, no matter how far down the ladder he or she is starting. That not only fosters loyalty and productivity, it’s also a good way to spot up-and-comers...”⁵⁰ It is imperative that to be successful in the search for new

talent, CBP must focus its efforts on early identification of potential and once identified, invest in the development of this talent. If we can reach those with potential early enough, we can then influence the course of their careers in a positive and beneficial manner. Plato once said, “The direction in which education starts a man will determine his future in life.”⁵¹

Identify, match and monitor.⁵² CBP could accomplish their goals of successfully identifying and cultivating future leaders by the creation of a three-part framework. This framework should systemically focus on three main objectives: first, identify the characteristics of potential within CBP employees; second, match these potential future leaders to appropriate interventions such as mentors, professional growth assignments and/or developmental programs thus enabling them to opportunity to grow and achieve success; and finally, continue to monitor their progress while nurturing their growth.

Before we can identify potential, it is important to define what attributes define leadership potential. The Corporate Leadership Council’s 2005 research report defined the high potential employee as “someone with the ability, engagement, and aspiration to rise to and to succeed in a more senior, more critical role.”⁵³ To ensure success, this identification process should be conducted with as little regard given as possible to the employees’ rank or position. In a military style chain of command, where rank and seniority hold great influence, it is often tempting to attribute an employee’s ability and worth on these superficial and often meaningless attributes. “Often organizations rely on high performance and length of time an individual has in an organization to select individuals with high potential. These indicators are between 8 to 17% reliable.”⁵⁴

So what is employee engagement and why is it important? In the book, *Inspiring Leaders*, Employee engagement is described as referring to “the individual’s involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work.” The author continues by stating that “employee engagement is positively and strongly related to critical business performance outcomes, including customer satisfaction, productivity, profit, employee retention and safety, all of which are indicators of sustained, veritable performance.”⁵⁵

In an article about how employee engagement drives success, author Eric Mosley wrote “A recent study by the Hackett Group stated, “Money is nice. But attention, recognition and the chance to learn new skills are the keys to keeping top performers on board as the job market improves.” Employees “will be more hesitant to make a jump if they feel like they’re part of a family, an organization that’s investing in them.” This evidence clearly shows that, if CBP takes the time to develop a program to identify and invest in those employees who have the potential to become future leaders, there are some powerful secondary benefits which could be realized as a result. Mr. Mosley further wrote that “This viewpoint was confirmed in a 2011 Globoforce survey that found 78 percent of people are motivated in their job because they were recognized.”⁵⁶ Among other recognition tools available, selection for participation in a mentorship program could provide a strong sense of recognition.

The Value of Mentorship

President George Bush once said “One mentor, one person, can change a life forever. And I urge you to be that person.”⁵⁷ For the sake of CBP, we need existing members of senior leadership to take this message to heart. Matching potential future

leaders to an appropriate mentor is a vital step in the leadership development process and increasing employee engagement.

Dr. James Harter, Gallup's chief scientist states "In good times, employee engagement is the difference between being good and being great, and in bad times, it's the difference between surviving and not... In good times and bad, low engagement reduces performance."⁵⁸ With the current economic climate and budget cuts hitting every agency deeply, CBP must strive to increase its employee engagement at all levels. "When executives are more engaged, they are more likely to develop the managers that report to them. Similarly, when managers are engaged, they are more likely to develop their employees."⁵⁹ Through its leadership development efforts, CBP will logically increase engagement, which will consequently increase employee satisfaction and performance.

The mentor relationship also allows for regular interaction and monitoring of progress. This monitoring feedback loop will develop organically through the mentorship process and allow for an enhanced sense of engagement for the employees. This monitoring process will also give the mentor opportunities to provide timely input and chart small course corrections thereby increasing the value of CBP's leadership development efforts.

As has been discussed earlier, succession planning and leadership development is of the utmost importance. Some would say the looming exodus of senior executives, the strategic leaders of today's government, presents us with a critical situation that directly threatens governmental functions. In the June, 2011 report "Preparing the

People Pipeline,” the Partnership for Public Service, in conjunction with Booz, Allen, Hamilton wrote,

By the end of 2015, according to OPM projections, more than 50 percent of the 7,746 senior executives in place at the beginning of 2011 will have left government, taking with them key institutional knowledge and critical skills. This brain drain, as it has been dubbed, could have dire consequences for government and its ability to protect the public’s health, safety and security.⁶⁰

While this report addresses the senior leader crisis as it applies to the entire government, the situation can also be applied to CBP and its senior leadership. It is clear from CBP’s current leadership development efforts that the organization realizes the need for immediate action. Up until now however, CBP has focused their leadership development energies primarily on the upper ranks of management, those who are in position and ready to assume senior leadership roles. The question is, what is CBP doing to ready the third and fourth string players? Elio Evangelista, the Director of Research with Cutting Edge Information states, “ongoing measures to develop the talent pool -- or talent bench -- remain critical to minimizing disruption while preparing for leadership changes”⁶¹

Conclusion

This paper has attempted provide a common definition of leadership development as a foundation while studying three main points of consideration germane to leadership development; current CBP policy, the programs that CBP currently utilizes to develop their future leaders and an analysis of alternative perspectives, programs and theories. This study was conducted with the desire to illustrate areas where CBP can focus their efforts in a different capacity to achieve great results. This paper examined the U.S. Army leadership development efforts and explored the all-inclusive

nature of their NCOES and OES systems while attempting to illustrate how these systems could be adapted to great success within CBP. Additionally, this paper endeavored to explore possible issues with the current leadership development structure and the effects on two primary areas of concern, CBP's organizational culture and climate and employee retention.

Through examination of successful leadership development programs, a case has been made for the creation of a comprehensive leadership development policy for CBP. It should be recognized that CBP has taken steps to develop their future leaders however; they have endeavored down this road without a policy to guide and coordinate their efforts. In a time where federal budgets are shrinking, having a defined policy that clearly defines leadership development as a necessary investment in CBP's future is vital.

On the importance of leadership development, Whirlpool CEO Jeff Fettig stated, "it is the single best investment we make in our company."⁶² A 2006 Army report declared, "Leader development is an investment, not a cost."⁶³ As CBP moves forward with an eye toward the future of leadership, the need for the development of a policy is clear and can no longer be delayed. I will close this paper with a quote from Philip Beddows which sums up nicely the responsibility we, as leaders of this organization, must bear:

Leaders must provide the necessary environment and opportunity for future leaders to develop and emerge. The words of Sir Phillip Sidney - "A brave captain is as a root, out of which, as branches, the courage of his soldiers doth spring" - may well be amended for today's world to: "A wise leader is as a root, out of which, as branches, the talents of his men and women doth spring."⁶⁴

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